

get it done by Memorial Day recess, and they have, and I appreciate that very much.

You know, this effort shows what can happen when people work together. We set a good bill that didn't have timetables or tell the military how to do its job, but also sent a clear signal to the Iraqis that there's expectations here in America, expectations that we expect—about how to move forward. I look forward to continuing to work with the Prime Minister and his Government in meeting those expectations.

I also am honored to be here at this place of compassion and healing on Memorial Day weekend. It's a weekend which gives us a chance to honor those who have served this country, whether it be in this war or in previous wars.

In being here, I also want to honor the healers here at Bethesda. It's—health care here is remarkable. They're dealing with some of the very tragic injuries in this war. People come here without much hope, and they leave, in many cases, healed and ready to move on with their lives. So I thank the doctors and the nurses.

I also thank the soldiers and their families who I met here, people who are remarkably brave and courageous. I'm constantly amazed at the strength of character of those who wear the uniform. To be the Commander and Chief of such men and women is really an awesome honor.

And so to our troops and their families, may God bless you. And may God continue to bless our country.

Thank you all very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:36 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki of Iraq.

## **Proclamation 8149—Great Outdoors Month, 2007**

*May 25, 2007*

*By the President of the United States  
of America*

### **A Proclamation**

During Great Outdoors Month, we celebrate the rich blessings of our Nation's natural beauty, and we renew our commitment

to protecting our environment so that we can leave our children and grandchildren a healthy and flourishing land. This month is also an opportunity to pay tribute to those whose hard work and dedication keep our country's open spaces beautiful and accessible to our citizens.

Through recreational activities such as fishing, skiing, biking, and nature watching, we can teach our young people about the wonders of our Nation's landscapes. Experiencing our Nation's natural splendor contributes to healthier lives for our citizens and a deeper appreciation for the great outdoors.

My Administration is working to protect and conserve our natural wonders for future generations. To keep our National Park System vibrant, we requested the highest increase ever in park operations funding in the FY 2008 Budget and launched the National Parks Centennial Initiative. We are also promoting responsible stewardship and conservation of our air, water, and land. Harmful air pollutants are down more than 10 percent since 2001, but there is more work to be done. Through the "Twenty in Ten" plan, my Administration aims to limit greenhouse gas emissions from motor vehicles and reduce America's dependence on oil by cutting our gasoline usage by 20 percent over the next 10 years.

In addition, we have restored, improved, or protected millions of acres of wetlands and enhanced our parks and wildlife refuges. We are also encouraging cooperative conservation, innovation, and new technologies to help ensure America's outdoors remain places where families and friends can learn, exercise, and create meaningful memories.

Countless citizens volunteer their time and talents to protect America's natural resources. By working together with the private and non-profit sectors and the general public, we can help preserve our local parks, lakes, rivers, and working lands. I am grateful for the efforts of all those who work to conserve our Nation's natural wonders, and I encourage citizens to visit [takepride.gov](http://takepride.gov) to learn about more opportunities to help keep our environment healthy and safe.

**Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush,** President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by

the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim June 2007 as Great Outdoors Month. I call on all Americans to observe this month with appropriate programs and activities and to take time to experience and enjoy the outdoors.

**In Witness Whereof**, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-fifth day of May, in the year of our Lord two thousand seven, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirty-first.

**George W. Bush**

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 11:05 a.m., May 29, 2007]

NOTE: This proclamation will be published in the *Federal Register* on May 30.

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### **Digest of Other White House Announcements**

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The following list includes the President's public schedule and other items of general interest announced by the Office of the Press Secretary and not included elsewhere in this issue.

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#### **May 19**

In the morning, at the Bush Ranch in Crawford, TX, the President had an intelligence briefing.

#### **May 20**

In the afternoon, the President and Mrs. Bush welcomed Secretary General Jakob Gijsbert "Jaap" de Hoop Scheffer of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and his wife, Jeannine de Hoop Scheffer-van Oorschot.

In the evening, the President and Mrs. Bush had dinner with Secretary General de Hoop Scheffer and Mrs. de Hoop Scheffer-van Oorschot.

#### **May 21**

In the morning, the President had a telephone conversation with Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki of Iraq. He then had an intelligence briefing. Later, he met with Secretary General Jakob Gijsbert "Jaap" de Hoop

Scheffer of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

In the afternoon, the President and Mrs. Bush had lunch with Secretary General de Hoop Scheffer and his wife, Jeannine de Hoop Scheffer-van Oorschot.

Later in the afternoon, the President and Mrs. Bush returned to Washington, DC. While en route aboard Air Force One, he participated in an interview with Steve Holland of Reuters.

#### **May 22**

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, in the Cabinet Room, he met with Republican Members of Congress.

The President announced his intention to nominate Ondray T. Harris to be Director of the Community Relations Service at the Department of Justice.

The President announced his intention to nominate Diane Auer Jones to be Assistant Secretary for Postsecondary Education at the Department of Education.

The President announced his intention to nominate Anne Woods Patterson to be Ambassador to Pakistan.

The President announced his intention to nominate Michael Schwartz to be member at large and Chairman of the Railroad Retirement Board.

The President announced his intention to nominate Jerome F. Kever to be a member of the Railroad Retirement Board (representing carriers).

The President announced his intention to nominate Virgil M. Speakman, Jr., to be a member of the Railroad Retirement Board (representing employees).

The President announced his intention to appoint Charles E. F. Millard as Interim Director of the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation.

The President announced his intention to appoint the following individuals as members of the Commission for the Preservation of America's Heritage Abroad: Linda Leuchter Addison; Ronald H. Bloom; Amy S. Epstein; Tyrone Fahner; Andrew M. Klein; Michael A. Menis; Warren Lloyd Miller; Harriet Rotter; Steven Edward Some; and Robert Zarnegin.